

Automobile Industry

Best Management Practices

These best management practices (BMPs) apply to all auto repair shops, auto body shops, car dealerships and mobile fleet washing services within the City of Eureka.

Many common car maintenance routines contribute to ocean pollution. Some auto repair establishments may not be aware of activities that could be negatively impacting our marine environment. Water runoff from streets, parking lots and driveways pick up oil and grease dripped from cars, asbestos worn from brake linings, zinc from tires and organic compounds and metals from spilled fuels. These chemicals drain into the ocean, harming sea life. Oil and grease, for example, clog fish gills and block oxygen from entering the water. If oxygen levels in the water become too low, aquatic animals die.

Here are a few simple practices you can follow to assure a healthy environment for both your business and our local waterways:



Cleaning Auto Parts Scrape parts with a brush or use a bake oven rather than liquid cleaners. Arrange drip pans, drying racks, and drain boards so that fluids are directed back into the sink or the fluid holding tank. Use nontoxic cleaning products. Baking soda paste works well on battery heads, cable clamps and chrome; mix the soda with a mild, biodegradable dishwashing soap to clean wheels and tires; for windows, mix white vinegar or lemon juice with water.

Preventing Leaks and Spills Place drip pans underneath to capture fluids. Use absorbent cleaning agents instead of water to clean work areas. Prevent fluid leaks from stored vehicles. Drain fluids such as unused gas, transmission and hydraulic oil, brake and radiator fluid from vehicles or parts kept in storage.



Implement simple work practices to reduce the chance of spills. Use a funnel when pouring liquids (like lubricants or motor oil) and place a tray underneath to catch spills. Place drip pans under the spouts of liquid storage containers.



Metal Polishing and Grinding Keep a bin under your lathe or grinder to capture metal filings. Send uncontaminated filings to a scrap metal recycler for reclamation.

Proper Storage of Hazardous Waste Keep your liquid wastes segregated. Many fluids can be recycled via hazardous waste disposal companies if they are not mixed. Store all materials under cover or inside to prevent contamination by rainwater.



Proper Disposal of Hazardous Waste Recycle solvents, oil, used oil filters, anti-freeze, batteries, and lubricants. Contact a hazardous waste hauler to dispose of saturated absorbents.

Cleaning Up Spills Follow your hazardous materials response plan, as filed with your local fire department or other hazardous materials authority. Be sure that all employees are aware of the plan and are capable of implementing each phase of the plan. Use dry methods for spill cleanup (sweeping, absorbent materials, etc.)



For any questions regarding hazardous waste please call the Department of Toxic Substances Control Hotline at (800)728-6942.

Washing Vehicles

Prevent oil and grease, suspended solids and toxins from washing into storm drains:

- Designate a washing site where water drains to the sewer system. The area must be paved and well marked as a wash area. Post signs prohibiting oil changes and washing with solvents. Train all employees to use the designated area.
- Wash vehicles with biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent. Use a bucket (not a running hose) to wash and rinse vehicles. This conserves water and minimizes urban runoff.

BMP information courtesy of City of Los Angeles' Storm Water Program

For more information call
(707)441-4184

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